

## ***Wheelrights***

### **Notes of meeting on 25 June 2007 in Yacht Club, Swansea Marina**

Present: Don Ashman (DA), David Croxall (DC), Eifion Francis (EF),  
David Naylor (DN), John Roach (JR), Lynda Shuker (LS), Rob Wachowski (RW)

Apologies: Rhian Evans (RE), Nick Guy (NG), Des Radford (DR), Geoff Wood (GW),  
Veronica Wood (VW)

The meeting was chaired by DC.

#### **2. Matters arising** from the 23 April meeting and not covered in agenda items.

Cycle training and beginner's ride. There had been successful cycle training classes on 28 April and 23 June. There had been just one 'client' on 12<sup>th</sup> May, but the ride from Blackpill up to the *Railway Inn* and back followed by coffee in the Lido set a satisfactory precedent.

Museum cycling exhibition (June-July). This has been widely praised.

Cycles on trains. DN had on 10 April written to his MP, Martin Caton, to lobby for improved provision for cyclists on UK trains. This was in anticipation of a Government white paper on the subject. He (DN) had made 4 specific proposals (see Appendix). Martin had followed this up and had forwarded replies from Tom Harris MP (Parliamentary Under Sec. of State, DfT), *First Great Western* and *Arriva Trains Wales*. Copies of the last two letters are provided as separate pdf files to be distributed with these notes. *First Great Western's* response to the first point was negative whereas *Arriva* responded positively to the last but would like WAG to pay the costs involved.

LS described her experience on a journey from Swansea to Burry Port on which the train manager ignored her obvious need for assistance taking her bike on and off the train. It was decided that DN should write to *Arriva* on behalf of *Wheelrights* about this; LS to let DN know train time and date and RW offered to find out to whom to write. (**Action LS, RW & DN**)

#### **3. Infrastructure update**

RW covered this; first: NCN 4 from E to W.

No short term prospect of extending the section of path from Port Tennant to the Co. boundary constructed in 1999 to the Tower Hotel. Instead the existing Fabian Way path will be upgraded. Improvements have already been made in the Port Tennant area where the path uses existing pavements. Work installing the new Fabian Way Bridge (to replace the old Sidings Br.) is expected to be complete by the end of this year

A new swing bridge on the W. side of the Tawe between the Sail and Trafalgar Bridges will take NCN 4 across the Marina entrance. This will link up with a continuation of the Bay path through Swansea Point (ie E. from the Observatory). This will provide an alternative to the existing NCN 4 through the Marina.

West of Gowerton: Traffic calming is to be applied to Pont-y-Cob road together with a 30mph limit on Culfor Rd to which it connects. Work on the new 1km section of NCN 4 which will provide a short cut to the Loughor Br. between Culfor Rd and the A484 is expected to go ahead as planned (in September?) although the difficulties with the developer David Maclean (See notes of 23 April meeting) have apparently not been resolved.

#### NCN 43 from Clydach southwards.

The Mons works alternative to the Clydach pipe bridge has been included as one of the c.80 projects in Sustrans *Connect2* bid. Publicity is needed to persuade people to vote for this in the TV vote later this year. DN to approach Ryland Jones to see how *Wheelrights* can help with this. (**Action DN**). RW advised that the 'Mons' Bridge and approach embankment over and along which the new path would run was not owned by that Co. but was apparently owned by the erstwhile British Rail.

Foxhole landslip (near S. end of NCN 43). RW advised that the work here is now complete.

#### **4. Campaigning**

As resolved at the last *Wheelrights* meeting DN had written to a Rob Jones of Halcrows about cycle provision in the SA1 development and to Reena Owen of CCS about cycling provision in the City Centre and Swansea Bay. He had received replies from both.

Rob Jones's was very positive, indicating that provision for alternative means of travel to the car were a priority, that there would be a 20mph speed limit in SA1 and that employers would be encouraged to provide facilities for cycle commuters. He had set up a *SA1 Travel Forum* which meets bi-monthly. A cycling oriented meeting was planned for late this year or early next. DN in his reply had requested an invitation for a *Wheelrights* rep. at this meeting but noted that this could be Ryland Jones as he could speak for both Sustrans and *Wheelrights*. Another initiative was that this week, 24 – 30 June, had been designated a *Sustainable Travel Week*. Concern was expressed that this had not been promoted, nor had RW been informed of these initiatives. DC agreed to write on behalf of *Wheelrights* to Brian Gibbon (the relevant WAG minister) about the lack of publicity about this *Sustainable Travel Week*.

The response from Reena Owen (on 25 May) was less positive. She expressed disappointment at DN's comment that cyclist representatives had not been consulted in earlier infrastructure developments (a happy exception being last year's Kingsway gyratory scheme) and noted that the *Cycle Forum* and its technical sub-group provided the means for this. We felt that she had slightly misunderstood our position but that we needed to 'tread carefully' so as to maximise her support and work effectively with the Council. She is perceived to be an ally. DN has been invited by Simon Charles to attend a meeting to discuss these issues, probably on 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> of July.

#### **5. Summer Programme**

Sustrans 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday ride. DN had been informed that the Sustrans party – of 100 or more cyclists – were scheduled to arrive at Swansea Museum at 5.15pm on Sunday 1 July for a reception with the Lord Mayor of Swansea. They hoped to be met by a *Wheelrights* contingent who would escort them from the museum to their overnight destination: the Duntant Rugby Club. A number of those present agreed to do this and DN will inform David Morgan (Sustrans, Cardiff). Concern however was expressed by a lack of communication from Sustrans: this was the first RW and others involved in CCS had heard about this reception and also there had been communication problems in connection with the Sunday night/Monday morning arrangements. In short: feathers have been ruffled.

9 July evening ride. The *Crofty Inn*, is now apparently excellent and we resolved to fuel up there rather than at the *N. Gower Hotel* as in the past. DN to forewarn them. (**Action DN**)

14 July beginner's ride. Hoping to get more than the single customer of last time Rhian and Veronica are asked to publicise this event. DN noted that there is already a flyer downloadable from [www.Wheelrights.org.uk](http://www.Wheelrights.org.uk) (**Action RE & VW**)

## **6. Autumn Programme**

We considered a suggestion from Nick Guy that we should hold a meeting for *Wheelrights* members (not the general public) in the Autumn to which Reena Owen would be invited. We approved this in principle and felt that it should be an informal exchange which would enable us to explore with her how best we could work with the Council. In Nick's absence we did not fix a date and deferred this to our next meeting (on 3 Sept.) In the meantime we should think about the format.

Time being short we failed to fix a timetable for future adult beginner's classes and associated rides. (Do this before the next meeting?)

## **7. Membership**

Deferred in absence of Membership Sec.(GW)

## **8. Website ([www.wheelrights.org.uk](http://www.wheelrights.org.uk))**

It came out that it might be good idea to change the photos on the home page every now and then. DN would appreciate being sent suitable photos (jpeg format).

## **9. AOB**

Connect2. RW recommended that the *Connect2* bid and how we can best support it should be on the agenda for our next meeting.

Flyers. DN advised that more *Wheelrights* flyers were needed for the museum exhibition. RW had several left and would provide some. It was not considered necessary to get this printed. Stocks could be replenished by photo-copying followed by another folding session in the *Railway Inn*

## **10. Next meeting**

7.30pm on Mon. 3 September in the Yacht Club.

Notes prepared by David Naylor (*Wheelrights'* Secretary)

## A P P E N D I X

A P P E N D I X to DJN's 10 April 07 letter to Martin Caton (MP)

### Four suggestions for improving cycle provision on UK trains

1. The old 125s such as *First Great Western* run between Paddington and S. Wales generally have adequate bike space (in the end of coach A) but there are two problems: 1) it is necessary to get out of the carriage having secured the bike then get in again by another entrance before the train leaves and 2) the velcro straps provided to secure bikes are a fiddle to fasten. The first could easily be solved if the train manager arranged for the connecting doors between the luggage and passenger areas to be opened before and after arrival at stations. He or she should be in attendance as the cycle passenger would have to pass through the manager's private compartment. The second requires a different attachment method – probably ceiling hooks as are widely used on the Continent and are now used on some new rolling stock here.
2. New high speed trains (HSTs) should provide more cycle space than the four spaces provided in, eg, Virgin's Pendolino trains. These are good in that bikes are suspended by their front wheels from hooks, but inconvenient in the way these are arranged: two on either side of a central corridor. This means that if both are occupied and your bike is on the remote hook you may have to lift the other bike off and put it back again to get yours out at a station. A better arrangement would be to have the corridor offset with the bikes suspended across the carriage adjacent to the corridor. With this arrangement bikes would not be blocked by others. An approx. three metre (10ft) length would be sufficient for six bikes. I have come across (and used) this arrangement on IC trains in Germany.
3. On Virgin's cross country routes (served by the Pendolino trains), and also on other train services, it is necessary to reserve a bike place in advance. This is OK except that if you try and take your bike and there is bike space available but you have not made an advance reservation you will not be allowed to travel – at least this is what I have told. A reservation should guarantee you a place but it seems quite unreasonable to ban travel with a bike when space is available. (A case when it would be reasonable to bar travel is when a space is available at the boarding station but is reserved for a bike boarding at a station before the intending traveller gets off.)
4. For non-intercity lines such as the *Heart of Wales* where one or two carriage trains are used a lesson could again be taken from German practice. Last year I used a local branch line in the Black Forest where the single coach comprising the train had two spacious entrance lobbies, rather like in the London tube trains. There was no special space for bikes but these lobbies were big enough to accommodate bikes and other bulky objects. Elsewhere I have used trains in which fold up seats are provided along the sides of the carriage so that they can be folded up to accommodate bikes. I recall a journey in N. Germany where I and others were seated opposite perhaps a dozen bikes leaning against seats folded up on just that side of the carriage.

Prepared by: David Naylor (Wheelrights Secretary and  
CTC's Swansea & West DA Right to Ride rep.)  
10 April 2007